

BT

480

.V5

IN PALESTINE
AT THE
EMPTY TOMB



E·E·VIOLETTE



Class BT480

Book .V5

Copyright N^o

COPYRIGHT DEPOSIT.

IN PALESTINE
AT THE EMPTY TOMB

E. E. VIOLETTE



There is nothing to see The tomb is empty

IN PALESTINE AT THE EMPTY TOMB

BY
E. E. VIOLETTE



NEW YORK
GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY

BT 480
.V5

COPYRIGHT, 1923,
BY GEORGE H. DORAN COMPANY



IN PALESTINE AT THE EMPTY TOMB. I

PRINTED IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

SEP 17 '23

©C1A752930

mo. 1.

Ms. A. 9. 2. 38
1892

To JOHN and GRACE SALA
MY FRIENDS

In whose home the most of these lines were written, and by whose glowing hearth through long winter evenings we talked of our common sorrow in life—this book is affectionately dedicated.

In the Hope of Immortality,

THE AUTHOR.

THE AUTHOR'S FOREWORD

Several years have passed since the first volume of the "In Palestine" series was written. *In Palestine With the Twenty-third Psalm* is the title of that little book. It has passed through several editions, and the kind treatment which it is still receiving at the hands of an indulgent reading public has encouraged the writer to release the second book of the series, hoping that it, too, may bring help and comfort to many homes of sorrow and become a companion to those who may need some little help to faith.

No heart but has its sorrow,
No life but has some care,
No tie but shall be broken;
For death is everywhere.

So I am sending *In Palestine At the Empty Tomb* upon its way.

E. E. V.

CONTENTS

CHAPTER	PAGE
I BELLS OF THE NIGHT	13
II VOICES OF THE DAY	21
III A HILL AND A GARDEN	31
IV BY WAY OF GETHSEMANE	41
V AT THE EMPTY TOMB	51
VI THE DISCOURSE IN THE STARLIGHT	63
VII LIFE AND DEATH	75
VIII FROM THE TOURIST'S DIARY	87

Chapter I: Bells of the Night

Chapter I: Bells of the Night

A full week had passed since the two companions, Tourist and Traveller, had visited the Fountain of David and learned the meaning of the Twenty-third Psalm. The time had been crowded with the exciting events which take place during the last few days of the Greek Easter festivities in the Holy City. Thousands of pilgrims were making ready for home-going to their various countries, having seen and kissed the Stone of Unction and touched their candles to the Holy Flame.

Jerusalem was ancient Babel and modern Bagdad all in one. The turmoil and strife in the Christian quarter was in striking contrast to the peace that enshrouded the Jewish quarter, for it was the approach of eventide on the Sabbath. Friday, the Mahometan Sabbath had passed with sufficient quarrelling to satisfy the most orthodox Christian and Muslim, and together they had desecrated Saturday, the Jew-

14 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

ish Sabbath after a fashion that would surely appease their respective deities. Now Sunday, the Christian Sabbath was near at hand and the devotees of sectarianism must have one more full and uninterrupted feast of sacerdotalism. To-morrow they would look for perhaps the last time in life upon the sombre and forbidding walls of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. They must leave the city of their dreams with Monday's dawn; hence the confusion of noises and tongues incident to making preparations on Saturday afternoon.

The long, tumultuous day waned, the sun dropped off among the hills beyond old Kirjath-Jearim and the weary crowds crept away into the shadows of the gathering twilight. Only heaven could know where these multitudes would find rest and sleep that night. With the ebb of the throngs came the flow of the tide of darkness pushing its way down David Street; down Christian Street; rushing through Zion Gate; slipping in by way of Damascus Gate; running around the brown walls and stealing down the narrow streets and thoroughfares and then, like a flood, rising higher and higher until the pall of night hovered like a black spirit

over minaret and turret and tower, baptising the Holy City in a deep tide of gloom.

Tourist and Traveller, themselves tired with much watching and walking, repaired to their hotel. They had finished dinner and were drinking Turkish coffee while comparing notes on their observations during the two Sabbath days just past. The Tourist drew forth his souvenir bag and displayed the trophies of his Easter campaign. A piece of candle that had touched the Holy Flame; a cord from the turban of a Muslim, fresh from Mecca; a chip from the altar stone in the Mosque of Omar; a piece of wood from the cross of Calvary—these, and several other relics including a red thread from the handkerchief of Mary Magdalene, were among the discoveries and purchases that would help him to remember his Easter visit to the Holy Land.

The Traveller had found no material memento during the whole week. He had only a memory. But it spanned the years and the tears of two millenniums and held him in the grip of the story of an amazing life that ended in the flesh and was born anew in the spirit, achieving its ends and aims in a wondrous way

16 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

among the sons of men in this same city. This was the meaning of his return to the Holy City at the Easter time.

The two men, after the Tourist had repacked his curios, talked a long time together. It was nearing midnight and they were starting to their rooms, when lo, the still night was broken by the wild ringing of a harsh and grating chime. Soon other bells joined; pealing, tolling, creaking, cracking, crashing; then others, and still others, until every dome and belfry in the Christendom of Jerusalem trembled and groaned with the weight of sound and swinging.

"Is the city ablaze in some great conflagration that all of these bells should be wildly ringing at this unearthly hour?" cried the Tourist.

"No," answered the Traveller. "The Christians want the Jews to know that this is the day for celebrating the resurrection of Christ."

"Well, they are making enough noise to raise the dead," said the Tourist. "Do they ring every Saturday midnight like this?"

"No," replied his companion. "Some of them do. But it gets monotonous to most of

them to ring every week. Every Easter season they all ring from midnight to noon, and there is little sleep within the vicinity of the city at such times."

"They surely ring with a vengeance," said the Tourist.

"Rather than with a vision," added the Traveller. "And they are only ringing to glorify their own sectarian views of life and death. The story of Christ's resurrection may not be told by noises of the night. It must be declared by voices of the day!"

"Well," rejoined the Tourist, "you know my views on the subject of the resurrection, and I am sure that nothing could ever change them. I believe in the life of the Christ man; but when it comes to his resurrection, I have another opinion. And the noises of this resurrection celebration are not at all conducive to credulity."

"He is wise indeed who says that nothing could ever change his views, particularly on a subject of such momentous import as the resurrection of Christ," remarked the Traveller. "But to-morrow we are to visit the Empty Tomb."

18 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

“Because of my respect for your faith,” said the Tourist, “I shall refrain from seeking any relic or memento at that tomb to-morrow.”

“On the contrary,” observed his companion, “your most precious travel treasure awaits its claimant on the morrow. And now, let us retire, for the hours are far spent and perhaps our very weariness may lure us away from the loud ringing of these bells of the night.”

“Hear the tolling of the bells—

Iron bells!

What a world of solemn thought their monody
compels!

They are neither man nor woman—

They are neither brute nor human—

They are ghouls:

And their king it is who tolls;

And he rolls, rolls, rolls,

Rolls

A paeon from the bells!

Bells, bells, bells,—

To the moaning and the groaning of the bells.”

Chapter II: Voices of the Day

Chapter II: Voices of the Day

A faint flush of purplish grey tinted the eastern horizon and kissed the lips of the coming dawn. Then streaks of red and yellow pencilled the sky like the ribs of a gigantic, glowing fan. Then a mantle of apple-green gold spread itself momentarily over the hills of the Hauran and the mountains of Moab. Then phantom light-waves came leaping across the Plain of Gilgal, dispelling the mists in the valley of the Jordan and reached out to embrace old Judæa with the soft, warm arms of the morning. Then the sun's full disk rolled up over Pisgah's height, swept clear of the sky-line and smiled forth in beauty and splendour upon the City of the Great King.

It was a glorious Sunday morning in April. The bells were still ringing; but their tones seemed subdued. Perhaps it was to enable old priests' voices to be heard as they intoned the litanies of the resurrection ritual. Perhaps the sunlight mellowed the chimes. Perhaps all

22 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

hands at the long, heavy ropes had grown weary. Perhaps it was the fatigue of over-zealous faith. Perhaps even the listening ear had become attuned to the multitudinous tongues of the belfries. Perhaps a subconscious credulity was listening for *another voice* with a deeper meaning. Who knows? In any event a Sunday morning in the city of Jerusalem is a travel experience worth while!

Although wearied from the Sabbath wanderings and the lack of rest on account of the ringing bells, the Tourist and Traveller had planned to get up betimes and watch the sunrise. The last moments of "false morning" had found them standing on the battlements of the Tower of David, near the Jaffa Gate in the western wall. Heaven had blessed them with the full benefits of a majestic dawn. What they saw has already been described—but all too inadequately. What they had really seen was a spectacle for angels rather than men.

"The year's at the spring,
The day's at the morn;
Morning's at seven;
The hill-side's dew-pearled;
The lark's on the wing;

The snail's on the thorn;
God's in his heaven—
All's right with the world!"

Clambering down the precipitous wall they returned to the hotel for breakfast. It was a typical Lord's Day morning in the Holy City. Men and women out of every nation under heaven were spending the Easter season among the sites associated with the last week of our Lord's life upon earth. Tourist and Traveller watched them passing into the city by way of Jaffa Gate. They were on their various ways to masses, sacrifices, purifying processes and prayers. But it was all in celebration of *one event*—the anniversary of the resurrection of Christ.

After watching them from the window of the breakfast room for a full hour the Tourist said: "Let us follow and see where they go."

"But of all the vast numbers from every quarter of the earth, which ones would you follow?" queried the Traveller.

"Let us follow them all into the city; then we may be able to select a small group and go to their place of worship," answered the Tourist.

24 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

Leaving the hotel they stepped into the street and joined the worshippers as they were passing along the last stretch of the Jaffa Road and underneath the ancient archway. Just within the walls the multitudes began to scatter and move away in various directions. Some went to the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Some went along the Via Dolorosa to the Two Little Sisters of Zion. Others went to the German Church. Others, to the chapel in the American Colony. Still others went to the Russian Church. A goodly number passed out the Jewish Gate and went to St. George's. The transient worshippers of that day numbered perhaps as many as the population of the entire city within the walls. The numerous churches did not want for audiences. The buildings were all crowded and the outside throngs outnumbered the devotees within by many thousands. There was no place of worship for any who had been late in entering the city.

"Whatever the differences among their creeds, they are all preaching one message to-day," said the Traveller. "And every voice this day is raised to proclaim the message of the resurrection."

"If that is the theme at every church to-day, then let us go out among the hills and worship a God who is not of the creeds," suggested the Tourist.

"Very well," answered his companion. "See those three men just coming through the gate. They will not go to one of the churches. I have seen them here before. We shall follow them. They are going for a walk around the city wall and it will be interesting to get their point of view."

"Who are they?" asked the Tourist.

"Two of them are students and the other, the old man, was formerly professor of Greek in the University of Athens," replied the Traveller. "The professor has for some time been a resident of the Holy City. I have known him for many years and you shall have the pleasure of knowing him before the day is ended. He is one of the greatest living authorities on Palestine, and, if we but have the opportunity of hearing him as he is instructing his companions, the day will be worth while for us."

The three men of whom they were speaking walked leisurely along a narrow lane leading out from David Street, stopped beside an old

26 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

fountain near the traditional site of the House of the Upper Room. Then passing out through the Zion Gate they made off down into the valley of Jehoshaphat to the pool of Siloam. They turned northward on the other side of the valley and walked up to the Brook Kedron, pausing momentarily at the gate of Gethsemane. Crossing back to the west of Kedron, they walked through a Mahometan cemetery and turned aside just north of the roadway to observe carefully the delineation of a little hill not far away.

“He is pointing out Calvary to the students,” said the Traveller; for they had followed the professor and his companions.

“Let us join them now and hear what he has to say,” urged the Tourist.

“It shall be as you wish,” said his friend. “And you shall hear a voice that will mean more than the ringing of the bells. Let us go at once.”

The Traveller was greeted by the aged professor with cordiality—they had not met for nearly a year—and the formalities of introducing the other members of the little group were soon out of the way. The wisdom of the pro-

fessor captivated the Tourist and he soon became the most eager of students.

"I was just getting ready to review the incidents and scenes connected with the last few hours of our Lord on this earth," remarked the professor. "It will be a pleasure to increase my class for the morning."

Thus the way was made easy for the travel companions and they listened with profound respect to the utterances of this great man of wisdom. At the suggestion of the professor they were seated on the high wall of a Muslim tomb, facing the Holy City.

"What is the most conspicuous thing about the wall of the city?" asked the aged Greek.

"The Gate Beautiful," answered one of the students.

"True enough," rejoined the Greek. "And it was through that gate, now a wall of solid masonry, that our Lord made his Triumphal Entry; and that event led to the tragedy of yonder hill," he added, pointing to a rugged ridge near the top of which grew a couple of twisted olive trees. "You see," he continued, "the three caverns just beneath the brow of that hill. What do they resemble?"

28 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

“A gigantic skull,” ejaculated the Tourist.

“You are right. That hill is Calvary, ‘the place of a skull’ of the crucifixion day,” remarked the professor.

The Traveller took copious notes of what the Greek then said about the death, burial and reported resurrection of Christ. The writer, having had access to these notes, will set down in the succeeding chapter an almost accurate translation, word-for-word, of the things that were spoken by the learned professor.

“I am the resurrection and the life :

He that believeth on me, though he die, yet shall he live :

And whosoever liveth and believeth on me shall never die.”

Chapter III: A Hill and a Garden

Chapter III: A Hill and a Garden

Golgotha is only a short distance north of Jerusalem. It was known in the ancient day as "the place of a skull." It is now better known in the nomenclature of the church as Calvary. On this diminutive hill, really a rugged limestone knoll, within full view of the passing crowds on the public highway, the man who claimed to be the Jewish Messiah and the Son of God was crucified one spring day nearly two thousand years ago.

As for the historicity of that tragic transaction there is not a reasonable foundation for the slightest doubt. Here incredulity goes a-begging. Here even the avowed infidel must stand with uncovered head. On this very spot the holiest man of all history was put to death. The deepest human emotions have always been awakened by innocent suffering and sacrifice, and the vocabulary of supernatural superlatives

32 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

might be exhausted and yet not fully describe the influence of the story of the crucifixion of Christ upon humankind. For no other tragedy has ever moved the world in such manner as it has been moved by this event.

Between Calvary and the city wall there was a quiet garden. In that garden was a private tomb. The garden was part of a small plot of ground that was the property of an Arimathæan named Joseph, and he had provided the tomb for his own last resting place. Joseph was wealthy, high in the councils of the Jews and yet, at the same time he was a disciple of Christ. Tender hands of modern Christians have restored at least a part of this garden in the shadow of Calvary, and Joseph's stone-hewn tomb, empty and yawning wide, is visited annually by unnumbered multitudes.

Immediately after the death of Christ Joseph interviewed Pilate in private asking that the body of the crucified One be given to him. The governor had seen and heard enough of the ghastly happenings of the day and was glad indeed to have some disposition made of the body. He had been moved to fearful superstitions by the attitude of his wife and by the

unusual conduct of Christ when he had tried him in the grey dawn of the morning. The natural disturbances of the day only augmented the strange fear that gnawed its way into his heart. He had washed his hands of the matter ; but all the waters of the Tiber could not wash the fear from his heart. Joseph's interview was timely. At least the burial of the body could be left out of the Roman records. Pilate gave the body to Joseph hoping against hope that this might be the last of the whole matter. But his was a hopeless hope—the hope of a deep remorse !

Leaving the palace of the governor Joseph called Nicodemus who was also a secret follower of Christ, and together they went to Calvary as the sad day was drawing to its close. These men accompanied by Mary Magdalene and Mary, the mother of Joses—a sorrowing group of four faithful friends—took the body of Christ from the cross and carried it down the hillslope to the tomb in the garden. Here, after proper care, according to Jewish burial customs, they deposited the body in Joseph's own new tomb and Joseph himself rolled the

34 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

heavy stone into its place and thus closed the sepulchre door.

With Calvary so very near—
About this tomb I wonder;
And here I often ponder
And ask if Joseph knew,
Watching the workmen hew
His tomb;
That here
The Saviour dear
Should find repose
Ere he arose?—
With Calvary so very near!

Immediately after the entombment Joseph departed, presumably to his home. But the two women sat for awhile on the ledge of stone over against the sepulchre. Then they returned to their homes and prepared spices and ointments for the sacred body of their friend. The subsequent movements of Nicodemus are not known. The crucifixion of Christ did not necessarily take place on the day before the regular weekly Sabbath. As a matter of fact the various records are against such a view. It took place on the day of Preparation for High Sabbath in the Passover week. The burial took place on the same day. On the day following the crucifixion and burial, the chief priests and

Pharisees (surely they would not thus desecrate the regular Sabbath), went to Pilate and demanded that the sepulchre door be sealed and guarded until the third day. The wretched governor readily acceded to their demand and eagerly urged them to go and attend to the matter with all possible diligence and despatch.

The fact that the guard was placed at the tomb of Christ was proof that even his enemies believed he had power to do what he had said about coming out of the grave. The man who in his life had kept his every promise—and what extravagant promises they were—might keep his promise concerning the resurrection. The man who in his life had made the high and mighty tremble and who had silenced by his wisdom and power, the proud Pharisees and priests,—what would he not do to them if he should arise from the dead! They had seen his deportment in life. No other man was ever like that. They had watched him during the trial. No other man ever thus confounded his accusers. They had witnessed his death. No other death was ever like that. And they were afraid! They had made one mistake when they nailed him to the cross. Now they wanted the

36 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

sepulchre carefully guarded "lest a last mistake be worse than the first."

Thus the Roman guard provided by Pilate and watched over by the chief priests and Pharisees was put in place after a careful examination of the sepulchre had been completed. They made a painstaking work of it. No possibility, no probability did they overlook! Jew and Roman alike sticklers for law, now risked their all upon the seal of Cæsar which they affixed with due pomp and ceremony to the massive stone at the door of the tomb and the side of the solid wall against which it reposed. All of the traditions of sixteen hundred years of Judaism which found consummation in the priests and Pharisees of that day, and all of the strength of invincible Rome were pitted at that guarded grave against the simple promise of one man! And only a few hours before he had not shown sufficient interest in life to save himself from death at their hands, notwithstanding the fact that he had all along claimed power to raise himself from the dead! Why pass through the agony of death while claiming such power? What a paradox! No words could describe the various shades of fear and doubt

and faith and uncertainty that characterized the hearts of these men who so zealously watched that rolling stone!

Day and night they must keep their vigil. But they had not long to wait. On the morning of the third day the report of the *expected* and the *unexpected* was sweeping with irresistible force over the whole city. Within a few hours the message of Christ's resurrection was the one topic of conversation. At the first news the disciples themselves were the most incredulous of all. But soon the report was confirmed. The story of the resurrection became not only a settled fact, it became the fundamental doctrine of the religion that was then and there started and named after its founder. The principles of Christianity had been many years in forming during the dispensations leading up to, and including the period of Christ's ministry; but the resurrection was not a growth. In the twinkling of an eye it sprang into history giving concrete form and faith to Christianity. And they who retreated in fear at the crucifixion, themselves became martyrs for the faith! And to this very day the power of the resurrection story remains undiminished! An

38 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

Empty Tomb in a tiny garden becomes the mightiest force of all time!

Through passing years the millions come and go
Along the sin-worn trail of pain and woe:
Seeking some solace in a world of tears,
Crying for courage in a world of fears.

And moving on they reach an ancient gate
Where peace and comfort for their tired hearts wait,—
And rest from every care. And faith born here
Brings hope eternal—for The Tomb is near!

Chapter IV: By Way of Gethsemane

Chapter IV: By Way of Gethsemane

It was high noon before the professor had finished the story of the suffering, death, entombment and resurrection of our Lord. The four listeners sat as if entranced by the sound of his voice; and the very landscape seemed to confirm his every utterance. The bells in the city were no longer ringing; but not one in the little group knew just when they were silenced.

“We must be going back to the city now; but perhaps you would care to join us in a visit to the Empty Tomb in the late afternoon,” said the Greek professor, as he told the Traveller and Tourist good-bye.

“By all means,” eagerly answered the Tourist, turning to his friend for confirmation of his enthusiasm.

“Where shall we meet?” asked the Traveller.

“Meet us at the Damascus Gate at five o’clock,” replied the professor.

42 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

The Greek and his companions then retraced their steps over Kedron and returned to the city by way of Siloam and the South Gate. The Tourist and Traveller were left standing at the gate of the Mahometan cemetery, near the old stone bridge that spans the historic brook. Both watched the departure of their friends; but neither seemed inclined to leave the spot where the gates of wisdom had opened at the words of the aged scholar.

“Let us go now to the Garden of Gethsemane and have lunch with one of the priests who is my friend and from whom you too, will receive a hearty welcome,” suggested the Traveller.

A few steps brought them to the white picket gate and a single pull at the cord on the doorpost set the little silver bell in the garden monastery a-tinkle. It was instantly answered by a brown-robed priest whose welcome was so genuinely cordial that even the Tourist was fully at home, although he had never visited the place before. The priest, long since passed on in the hope of the resurrection, was known to travellers as “Father Kindly.” His unfailing kindness to all visitors had won for him this tender sobriquet. For many years he had kept

the small garden beneath the three or four olive trees; and to him, as to many others, it was sacred as the Prayer Place of the Son of God. Here the deepest mystery of the incarnation had transpired. Tourist and Traveller were soon resting in the library while "Father Kindly" busied himself about preparation for the noonday meal.

"What did you think of the Greek teacher?" asked the Traveller of his friend.

"I am still under the spell of his voice," answered the Tourist, "so I am not prepared to tell you what I think. While he was talking I believed all he said. In fact I have always believed all of it except the story of the resurrection; but his clear, matter-of-fact fashion of putting the whole record of scenes and events together indicates that he simply presupposes the resurrection story to be just as true as the rest of it—as if the rest could not be true without the resurrection! I confess that he has put me to thinking on the subject from an entirely different angle than I had ever thought of it before."

"And with all you say," rejoined the Traveller, "he only hinted at the place of the resur-

44 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

rection in the divine scheme of things ; but that he holds it to be the one power behind the message of Christianity is obvious from his closing remarks. He has thought long and carefully upon the subject and our visit to the Empty Tomb this afternoon will be an unusually interesting experience for us."

"Earth at this hour is shaken with the passion
Of Resurrection fire.
Stupendous forces move and mold and fashion
Unto God's great desire.
The only death is death in man's perception ;
The only grave is grave of blinded eyes ;
Creation's marvel mocks at man's deception—
It is man's mind that from its tomb must rise!"

At this juncture "Father Kindly" called his guests into the tiny dining room where they joined him in a simple but plentiful meal. The conversation naturally turned to the events of the morning and the Tourist found himself describing with fidelity the dissertation of the Greek professor. He had never before studied these outstanding doctrines of Christianity at first hand in the very land that gave them birth, and an interest he had not hitherto felt was aroused within his heart. Years before, the priest and the Traveller had experienced this

same feeling; and they watched with deep enthusiasm the Tourist's increasing faith.

"The Greek is not of my faith," said the priest; "but his scholarship entitles him to the intellectual homage that every student of the Land and the Book is compelled to pay. No thoughtful person can hear him without leaving richer in faith and wisdom. I have been to the Empty Tomb with him. Before that visit, I was somewhat of a doubter. Ever after, my faith in the resurrection has been my richest possession. You should go with him to that sacred place if you are to be in the city for awhile."

"We are to go with him this afternoon," remarked the Tourist.

"Then you are to be blest of heaven and I urge you to speak no more of the resurrection now," said the priest. "Instead let us go into the garden and talk of the agony in Gethsemane. An hour there will only intensify your interest in the last hours of the life of Christ upon our earth."

The priest took each of his guests by the arm and, walking between them, he led them into the garden. With the brethren of his order, he

46 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

had kept the place for more than sixty years. Gethsemane that day was a paradise of pansies, violets, lilies of the valley and roses of Sharon, all set out and tended in orderly and artistic fashion. For several hundred years before the coming of "Father Kindly" the garden had been kept by an order of monks, and visitors from many lands and ages have breathed the inspiration of its serene and sacred atmosphere.

"Tell us of the traditions of Gethsemane," said the Tourist, addressing his remarks to the priest.

"Traditions! In the common usage of that word, we have none," said the priest. "If prayer has a place in history, this is the most historic spot on earth. We never speak of legends and traditions in Gethsemane. The Latin order, to which I belong, always reckons with this little garden between Olivet and Kedron as a place well established in history. This is the Gethsemane of the Four Gospels. It meets the requirements of the sacred record not only, it has maintained its identity through all of the changing fortunes of the Holy Land. Sixteen hundred years ago Eusebius and Jerome spoke of this as the place where the

Master was arrested after the 'Prayer of Agony in the shadow of the Mount of Olives.' Throughout the centuries the students of Palestinian bibliography have never seriously questioned the testimony of these great scholars of the early church. The Greeks have recently created a Gethsemane not far from the Virgin's Tomb; but that is only a 'spite' garden, and no thoughtful person considers their claim for it any more than he accepts the tradition of the Church of the Holy Sepulchre. Over there is the 'Tree of the Agony' and, while two thousand years is a long life for an olive tree, yet we know that somewhere near this very place we could have heard His voice if we had stood here on that tragic night He prayed for 'the cup to pass.' Gethsemane here and Calvary yonder are facts in history. They are facts too, in human experience, without which no mortal may taste the sweets of life eternal. Gethsemane is soul-surrender to the perfect will of God: Calvary is body-sacrifice to meet the conditions of perfect love. Gethsemane is the Outer Court of the Temple of Immortality; Calvary is the Holy Place; The

48 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

Tomb is the Holy of Holies. God and Immortal Life belong to him who enters the temple."

"Waken, O world, if ye would glimpse the wonder
Of God's great Primal Plan!
Open, O ears, if ye would hear the thunder
Hurled from the heights to man!
How long shall Christ's high message be rejected?—
Two thousand years have passed since it was told.
Must One again be born and resurrected,
Ere man shall grasp the secret, ages old?
What, then, the miracle of Easter day?
What meant the riven tomb, the hidden Might
That conquered Death and rolled the stone away
And brought the Master back to mortal sight?
This! That throughout the worlds, One Life, un-
broken,
Rushes and flames in an eternal vow.
Death can not be, and never has been spoken—
God and Immortal Life are *here* and *now!*"

Chapter V: At the Empty Tomb

Chapter V: At the Empty Tomb

The wide shadow of the East Wall of the Holy City was creeping down into the valley of Brook Kedron and the lofty minarets were standing like exclamation points against the red glow of the afternoon sun. "Father Kindly" had turned his hour-glass for the fourth time since the arrival of his guests. Now it was approaching the time for them to keep their appointment with the Greek professor at the Damascus Gate.

The gentle priest bade them a touching farewell, saying to his old friend, the Traveller: "When we meet again it shall be beyond the Empty Tomb. May the heavenly Father keep us all in the hope of the resurrection. After all, life holds nothing else worth while for the children of earth."

As the two men departed from Gethsemane the Tourist said to his companion: "Is it not

52 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

strange that faith in the realities of the Christian revelation is the *normal* atmosphere of these men who live in Palestine?"

"No," replied the Traveller; "it is only natural that this should be true. These men really seek reasons for faith; whereas we seem to look for excuses to doubt. Palestine is no place for a doubter who seeks for confirmation of his doubt. The Holy Land like the holy Bible, if studied in the spirit of doubt and criticism will appear in a difficult and confusing aspect; but if approached in the spirit of candid searching after truth, it will reveal almost as much truth as the very Bible itself. Only an uncandid mind could reject the words of 'Father Kindly' in Gethsemane. The closing events of Christ's life are too well attested for any thoughtful person to doubt them seriously. No, my friend, the Greek and the priest are wise men, and we would do well to seek for confirmation of the beautiful faith they teach; but we shall hear more at the Empty Tomb."

Recrossing Kedron they walked along the road that skirts the North Wall until they came to the Damascus Gate. Hordes of pilgrims were passing through this portal and leaving

the city. The last of the Easter services had been held and they were now starting on the first lap of their homeward journey. They would reach Ramallah or Bethel before night-fall. By going thus far on Sunday afternoon they would avoid the real exodus of Monday morning. The Tourist and Traveller pushed through the gateway and waited within the walls for the coming of their friends of the morning.

“There is no God but Allah; and Mahomet is the prophet of God! Come to prayer! Come to prayer!” It was the clear voice of the muezzin calling from a near-by tower of Islam. Muslims were spreading their prayer rugs, and many an ugly quarrel took place between them and the Christians as the latter poured out through the gate.

“Religion takes strange turns in its devotees,” remarked the Tourist.

“Yes,” answered the Traveller; “but in this case we have a reasonable test of religion between Muslim and Christian. The former is imitating the founder of Mahometanism; the latter is denying the Founder of Christianity by such conduct. To imitate the Founder of

54 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

our religion is to prove that it is the purest form of faith ever known to man. Therefore our very destinies depend upon it. That is why Christ was raised from the dead. That is why he is alive in the conscience and in the consciousness of a day that dates itself two thousand years after his life in the flesh.”

It was five o'clock precisely when the Greek professor greeted the two men at the gateway. He was alone. The young students of the morning had remained behind. The three then turned out through the gate and walked along the footpath beside the main highway to avoid the crowds. When they neared the top of the hillslope they turned a hundred yards to the right and stopped midway between the olive trees on Calvary. They had seen this same place from the distance in the morning. Standing here among the graves, for Calvary is now a Muslim cemetery, the professor read from the Greek scriptures the complete account of the crucifixion, pausing between sentences for the Traveller to interpret his words. The Tourist was listening as one enraptured. Scarcely aware that the Greek and his friend were present, for the reading and the inter-

pretation had ended, he was saying, while tears filled his eyes:

“Surely he hath borne our griefs, and carried our sorrows;

Yet we did esteem him stricken, smitten of God, and afflicted.

But he was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities;

The chastisement of our peace was upon him; and with his stripes we are healed.”

The cool shades of approaching twilight were kissing the valley and the slanting sunlight was crowning the hills. The last of the straggling pilgrims had passed along the roadway, hard by. The Turkish guards were closing the massive gates of the city. Jerusalem was immersed in the immensity of silence. The spirit of eventide brooded over Calvary, softening the rude outline of “the place of a skull.” At the foot of Golgotha was the garden of the Empty Tomb where solitude swayed its sceptre over the domain of resurrection memories. Surely no more auspicious time could be chosen for a visit to that holy shrine.

“It was at this hour that Joseph and Nicodemus came to take the body of our Lord to

56 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

the place of entombment," said the professor.
"Let us go down now to the sepulchre."

A winding footpath leads down the slope of Calvary in the direction of the Holy City. It passes through the edge of Joseph's garden which is not a stone's throw from the site of the crucifixion. Down this easy way the three men walked, the Greek and the Traveller arm in arm; the Tourist following only a few steps behind, singing as he went :

"Lead, kindly light ! amid the encircling gloom !
Lead thou me on !
The way is dark and I am far from home,
Lead thou me on !"

When they reached the foot of the hill they paused before a narrow gate. The small enclosure in front of The Tomb, spread out to the south and sloping gently toward the city wall is known as the parcel of ground that belonged to Joseph of Arimathæa. Entering the tiny gate, a few steps brought them to the door of The Tomb. Darkness was more than an hour away. The purple glow of the Judæan sunset flooded the little garden with soft, pale light and illumined the tomb chamber with a slow, full tide of subdued glory. They "stooped to

look in" as did Peter when Mary's message sent him running to this same portal of death and life. With uncovered heads they entered and stood within the sacred precincts and looked carefully and reverently about them. The Greek and the Traveller had been here before and they soon passed without The Tomb leaving the Tourist to his own meditations within. No word of conversation had passed among them since coming down from the brow of Calvary.

When the Tourist finally rejoined his companions the three of them sat down on the grass before the open door of The Tomb. At the request of the Greek professor the Traveller read from memory the crucifixion and resurrection chapters of the Four Gospels and the first and second chapters of the Acts of the Apostles. If the reader of this little book will turn to these scriptures and peruse them just here he will better understand the meaning of the aged teacher's discourse which I am going to set down in the following chapter.

Night had fallen by the time the Traveller had finished the reading and the men arose to return to the hotel. As they walked westward

58 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

along the north wall of the Holy City the rugged turrets and imposing battlements above the Damascus Gate frowned down upon them like sullen sentinels at the portal of eternal night. But the phantom dusk was soon lifted and the stars, shining symbols of everlasting light and life, smiled from the clear, blue heavens as if to guide them into a deeper knowledge of all they had experienced during this long, eventful day.

The Tourist and Traveller invited the Greek teacher to dine with them at the Hotel Fast just outside the Jaffa Gate. After dinner the men sat for a little time together over their Turkish coffee. Then they all went to the home of the Greek. A walk of thirty minutes westward along the Jaffa road brought them to the unpretentious dwelling which was fashioned after the pattern of the houses of Palestine in the days of our Lord's life upon the earth. Without entering the house they ascended the outer steps to the housetop and there, reclining comfortably among the soft cushions, basking in the sheen of Syrian starlight, the travel companions listened with bated

breath to the dissertation that fell from the eloquent lips of the Greek.

A late moon bathed the sleeping city with mellow light and silvered the mists that draped minaret, spire and dome as the Tourist and Traveller walked back toward the hotel. Arm-in-arm they went slowly along their wonder-walk singing on the way:

“There’s a wonderful story I’ve heard long ago,
’Tis called ‘The sweet story of old’—
I hear it so often wherever I go,
That same old story is told.
And I thought it was strange that so often they’d
tell
That story as if it were new;
But I’ve found out the reason they love it so well—
That old, old story is true!”

Chapter VI: The Discourse in the Starlight

Chapter VI: The Discourse in the Starlight

It is an old but true saying that the Bible is the most wonderful and extraordinary book in the whole realm of the world's literature. Whoever reads it just as he would read any other book will soon discover that it is unlike any other book he ever read. It is not to be worshipped as a fetish, because like everything else that has been entrusted to human keeping, it has its imperfections. Only an uncandid mind, however, could refuse to acknowledge the superiority of the religion it teaches. And it is upon this religion that the moral, spiritual, and intellectual destinies of mankind inevitably depend.

The Bible too, has for its foremost character the noblest man that ever walked among the children of this earth. Human or divine, Jesus Christ was the nearest approach to God that we have ever known. It is enough to know that

64 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

no man is able to find God without him. It is sufficient to realise that the ways of salvation, righteousness and peace are forever being offered to men and nations through him. And the amazing thing about it all is that these sublime blessings are proclaimed to the world in the name of one who like all others that ever lived, went down to death and the grave. Thus all of the achievements of Christian faith have been wrought in the name of a dead man if it so be that Christ was not raised from the dead! Herein is found the secret that distinguishes Jesus Christ from all other teachers and reformers of history. *His work was accomplished after his death!*

While Christ lived he achieved less than any other notable character of which we have any record. Measured by the work of a lifetime, by battles fought and victories won between the cradle and the grave, the life of Christ was a failure; and his enemies easily outwitted him and triumphantly brought his work and life to an ignominious close by slaying him upon the cross. If death ends all, the crucifixion of the man of Nazareth was the deepest disgrace in the annals of time! If we

The Discourse in the Starlight 65

are to make a moral and intellectual estimate of Christ by his lowly life between Bethlehem and Calvary, we will have to admit that many other Bible names must be written over his on the scroll of fame. Joseph, in Egypt; Moses, the law-giver; Isaiah, the prophet; John the Baptist; Saul of Tarsus—and a dozen other outstanding figures of Sacred Story are to be reckoned with as having done more for the world and for the age in which they lived, when we measure their works by the span of a regular life. But the sum of their mighty deeds is as nothing when placed beside the achievements of Christian genius and the triumphant and convincing victories of faith that is in Christ Jesus. No other dead man was ever the author of a progressive faith. In the whole field of the world's religions Christianity is the only friend of human advancement; the other religions are the relentless foes to progress. *This means that the author of Christianity is a living fact in the great to-day.*

It was during the *life* of Moses that he gave to Israel the Ten Commandments; it was after the *death* of Christ that he gave to his disciples the Great Commission. A single race long

66 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

time ago outlived the decalogue; but the gospel of Christ is an everlasting message for all races of men. The law of Moses is dead; the word of Christ is a living and dynamic power. It was while Solomon *lived* that he built the magnificent temple in Jerusalem; it was after the *death* of Christ that he built his church. The edifice reared in the days of Solomon has served its time and gone into dust and oblivion; but the church of Christ is the mightiest living force in the world to-day. Xerxes, Cyrus, Alexander, Cæsar and Napoleon conquered their millions and founded empires only to see them go down to wreck and ruin. These mighty conquerors too, were forever defeated in death. Their conquests were of this life. They *were* facts in history. They are all dead. But Christ *is* a fact in the life of our day. And the kingdom which he founded *after his death* is increasing in scope and power throughout the whole world. When he said: "Upon this rock I will build my church, and *death shall not keep me from building it*," he issued a challenge to death, common enemy of all mankind, and the spiritual victories recorded in the Acts of the Apostles are the unimpeachable evi-

The Discourse in the Starlight 67

dences of his triumph over the grave. *Jesus Christ is the one man who was not vanquished by death.*

If death is the penalty meted out for violation of the laws of life, then it is only reasonable to expect that every mortal must die. If death is "the wages of sin," then we must accept our pay and go the way of all the earth; for "we have all sinned." But among the sons of men we have a solitary exception to these two statements. Jesus Christ never violated any law, and he was absolutely sinless. It follows, therefore, that death could not conquer him; that the grave could not forever hold him. This is why the world has found a deathless hope in the story of The Empty Tomb. While he lived, Christ had nothing to offer his age except his spotless life and all that went with it; but this was enough for the ones who walked and talked with him if they had only known the worth of true godliness. Since they did not understand, surely the moral and spiritual economy of the Creator could not allow that pure life to be lost forever in death. *The resurrection from the dead was the only fitting and reasonable consummation of such a life as the*

68 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

man Jesus Christ lived upon this sin-cursed earth.

Just as Christ is unique among men so also is the Bible unique among books. And it does not take any stretch of the imagination to discover why Christ and the Bible are so placed in the estimate of unbiased scholarship. Christ is unlike other men and the Bible is unlike other books for the simple reason that the fate of the Bible is hinged upon Christ and the fate of Christ is hinged upon the resurrection story. Since death could not destroy Christ, it follows that the Bible has become a book throbbing with vitality and life-giving power. It has withstood the storms of time and the tests of criticism and in undecaying might and super-human majesty it sweeps resistlessly onward in its heaven-directed course, swaying the lives of men and nations and determining the moral destinies of the world. Herein is seen the power of the resurrection. If Christ had not been raised from the dead the Bible would be like the Alkoran or any other book; its records would have closed with Calvary, and it would simply be another enemy to spiritual and intellectual advancement. *The Bible story of The*

The Discourse in the Starlight 69

Empty Tomb is the beginning of the rule of love and the reign of life and liberty among the peoples of the earth.

The Bible glorifies death and guarantees life which death cannot touch. The seal of this glorification is The Empty Tomb. The space between the Passover of Christ's condemnation and the Pentecost of his vindication links earth to heaven and establishes immortality as our reasonable goal. Whoever reads the crucifixion and resurrection chapters of the Four Gospels and the opening chapters of the Book of Acts will never think lightly of the message which they bear. They suggest the startling and thought-provoking fact that *the Bible is the only book in the literature of the world that does not lose its interest with the death of its leading character.*

It is the power of the resurrection that bridges the gulf between Calvary and Pentecost and paves the way for the spiritual conquest of the world. The book called the Acts of the Apostles is the most triumphant volume in the whole field of history. The Christ of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, limited by inauspicious birth, lowly relationship and inhospitable

70 | In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

pitiable environment, started the gigantic task of winning the world from sin by the power of an amazing love. As human records are kept, his work was finished ere it was well begun—he was nailed to the cross. But the Christ of the Acts of the Apostles takes up again his mighty work and carries it on to glorious victory, for now there is no difference between him and Omnipotence. Now he continues in majesty and unlimited power the work which he commenced in weakness and in shame. *The conquests of Christianity are not the works of a dead man; they are the achievements of One who has entered into the fulness of immortality.*

The resurrection of Christ from the dead is the most significant fact in his life not only, it is the central fact of all history. The evidences offered in support of it would establish any other fact in that, or any other age. There is not a reasonable basis for doubt at this important point in the career of the Christ. The God of everlasting life has made the resurrection of Jesus Christ the mightiest fact in his divine plan. *To deny it is to miss the one sure promise of immortality for us all.*

These were the words that fell from the lips

of the Greek as he entertained his two friends in the Syrian starlight. I have copied them from the notebook of the Traveller. I told of their departure from this alluring scene in the preceding chapter. Just below the Traveller's memorandum of this discourse, I discovered the following lines which he must have written that night:

“I am well convinced that my departed friends are so far from having ceased to live, that the state they now enjoy can alone with propriety be called life. I feel myself transported with impatience to join those whose characters I have greatly respected and whose persons I have loved. Nor is this earnest desire confined alone to those excellent persons with whom I have been connected. I ardently wish also to visit those celebrated worthies of whom I have heard or read so much. To this glorious assembly I am speedily advancing; and I would not be turned back on my journey, even on the assured condition that my youth should again be restored. . . . In short, I consider this world as a place which nature never intended for my permanent abode; and I look on my departure from it, not as being driven from

72 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

my habitation, but simply as leaving an inn.”—
Cicero.

“Immortality o’ersweeps
All pains, all tears, all time, all fears—and peals
Like the eternal thunders of the deep
Into my ears this truth—Thou liv’st for ever!”

Chapter VII: Life and Death

Chapter VII: Life and Death

“We live in deeds, not years ; in thoughts, not breaths ;
In feelings, not in figures on a dial.
We should count time by heart-throbs.

He most lives,
Who thinks most, feels the noblest, acts the best.
And he whose heart beats quickest lives the longest :
Lives in one hour more than in years do some
Whose flat blood sleeps as it slips along their veins.
Life is but a means to an end,
Beginning, mean, and end to all things,—God.
The dead have all the glory of the world.”

—*Bailey.*

It was the hour of midnight when Tourist and Traveller, leaving the home of the Greek and making their way to the hotel, paused at the entrance of the narrow outside street leading down to Jaffa Gate and listened to the clear ringing of a distant bell. The music was wafted across the hills from the direction of Bethlehem. Soon the deep-voiced belfries of the Holy City joined in the midnight monotone and the pealing tide of sound echoed and reverberated between the ancient walls and the moon-shrouded mountains round about Jerusa-

76 | In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

lem. For a full ten minutes they troubled the quiet of the sleeping city with their tumultuous cadences and then droned away into deep and peaceful silence again. The very hush of the holy hour was like a still voice whispering to the travel companions that another anniversary of the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead had gone from the earth for ever.

Just as they were about to proceed to the hotel they observed a bright light shining from the window of one of the imposing houses set some distance back from the street. Shadowy forms flitted to and fro in front of the light, and several servants, crying softly in the shadows could be heard and seen in the doorway.

“There is something wrong here; and this is the home of my good friend, the Christian Arab, Shukrey Ali Hassan,” said the Traveller. “Let us turn aside and investigate. It may be that one of the servants is dead. But that would hardly keep the household awake at this time of night. Perhaps my friend is dangerously ill.”

They made their way quickly and quietly across to the group of servants and one of them

instantly recognised the Traveller who had often been a guest in the home of Shukrey Ali. In fact this very servant had accompanied his Master and the Traveller on an overland caravan journey to Damascus the previous year.

“Allah be praised, my Master’s friend has come to him in his great sorrow,” cried the servant.

“Where is thy Master? Laban, and what sorrow has come upon him?” said the Traveller, calling the servant by name.

“I will take thee to him and he himself shall tell,” answered Laban; and with that, he led Tourist and Traveller to the open door of the house where Shukrey Ali himself met his old friend with outstretched arms. Tears were glistening in his eyes as he turned his full face up to the moon. Deep lines of sorrow were pencilled upon his pale countenance and the welcome he gave was out of a troubled heart.

“Thrice welcome, my ancient friend and brother,” said Shukrey. “But you and your friend have come to me at a strange time. Perhaps an angel has sent you to give me needed strength. My daughter, my beautiful Reba

78 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

died at the going down of the sun to-night. I watched for days and nights by her side, but all to no avail. For a little time on the Lord's Day I left her bedside and visited the Empty Tomb. That was the last place we ever went together, and she wanted me to go because it was the anniversary of Our Saviour's resurrection, you know. When I returned just before the close of day, she asked me if The Tomb was still there, and if I still believed The Story, and when she heard my answer, she passed on with a smile upon her lips as I pressed them to mine in her departure. My only child, my lovely Reba has gone to her everlasting home. She has gone to her mother who left us the night when little Reba came."

His grief was almost uncontrollable as he told us of his daughter's death, and the dismal lamentation of the servants without made it indeed a house of mourning. The Traveller explained to the Tourist that the father could not quiet the servants who, true to the traditions of the Orient, were indulging in sorrow that refused to be comforted. That was why Shukrey himself had sat so long time by the body of his daughter.

“I will quiet your servants, Shukrey Ali, and with my friend will watch through the night beside Reba’s bier,” said the Traveller. “Go now, my good friend, and find rest for your tired body and comfort for your broken heart. You know my love for Reba.”

The Traveller stepped out of doors and gathered the servants together. When he had spoken a few quiet words to them, they departed in the moonlight and silence prevailed about the house of death. Embracing Shukrey Ali, he bade him a tender and affectionate good-night as he led him to his sleeping chamber. When the father had gone to sleep, Tourist and Traveller took up their vigil beside the death-couch of the beautiful Reba.

The Traveller had known the good Arab and his family for many years. He had met Reba’s mother, a charming Armenian Christian woman, only the year before the birth of the child. That was twenty years ago. So Reba was nineteen when she entered into rest. She had been as a Christian rose, nurtured in the thorny environment of paganism and doubt. But her faithful father had trained her in the way of the Nazarene and her life had been a constant

80 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

benediction. Turk, Arab, Jew, Greek,—none but knew and loved the beautiful Reba Hassan. Her smiling face would be missed; but the memory of her could never vanish from the hearts of this generation in the City of the Great King. *True, death does not end all; for the memory of our loved ones cannot die with them.*

But now she was dead. Tender-hearted, sweet-voiced, bright-eyed, beautiful, faithful Reba Hassan was dead. Calm and strange was the change that had come upon her. What anguish would be awakened in the city when the news of her death should go the rounds. She whose life had brought so much of joy had passed to the death that could bring but sorrow. Dear, fair, pure, true Reba Hassan was dead. She who had dreamed and hoped and trusted and prayed and whose life had glorified a thousand other lives, was dead. *How could the light of heaven allow this shining earthly light to be extinguished forever?*

The Traveller drew aside the silken canopy which covered the silent form. The two men then stood and looked a long time upon the lifeless face. The bright moon shining in at the

window traced a halo of glory about her head and shoulders. The Traveller was weeping silently. The Tourist was the first to speak.

“Oh, the greatness, the awfulness, the mystery of death,” he whispered reverently, for the very spirits of his own dead loved ones seemed somewhere in the moonlit chamber.

“Nay, my friend,” said the Traveller, “you have but uttered the error of the ages upon the subject of death. Life, not death, is the mystery! Science, history, and human experience have taught us beyond all doubt that our bodies are but elemental dust, designed to inevitable decay and dissolution. The body of beautiful Reba Hassan has but passed to its original and natural estate. There is no mystery here now. The mystery has been in the nineteen wonderful years that she lived and loved and had her being; the mystery is that this sleeping form had ever waked at all! While she was animated with vital, throbbing life; while this body was swayed by the power of mind to love and long and hope and fear and weep and sing; while it stood erect in graceful, living beauty; while she could think until agony or happiness and feel until the bursting of grief or of rap-

82 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

ture, this, all of this was the mystery! *Oh, the greatness, the awfulness, the mystery of life!*"

Recanopying the bier and its inanimate occupant the two companions seated themselves in a cushioned corner of the room to keep the death-watch until the coming of the dawn. It would be impossible to put down the whispered conversation of those long, sleepless hours beside the body of Reba Hassan; but the reader will be interested in seeing here some of the sentences that ushered in the morning.

"I had not reasoned thus concerning life," said the Tourist. "As you put it, life, not death, is the thing to love and fear."

"Yes," remarked the Traveller. "Whoever has learned how to live will never be fearful of death. The riddle of life must be solved by life itself. To this very end we have the story of the Empty Tomb. The resurrection of Jesus Christ is not so much the defeat of death and the solution of the problem of the grave; it is the believer's guarantee of immortality. *The story of the Empty Tomb is simply the vindication of the perfect life of the Man of Galilee.*"

Day was breaking above the Holy City when Tourist and Traveller took leave of Shukrey

Ali and walked slowly in the morning light toward the hotel. Birds were a-twitter in the olive trees, the voice of the turtle-dove was heard in the dooryard, and a few early pilgrims were making their way down to Jaffa Gate. Life and death were coming close together in the way, and the living knew it not. The two men waited a few moments before mounting the steps to their hotel which was just west of the city wall. They were watching the anxious pilgrims who clamoured for an entrance. The night watchman was still asleep. The ancient gate had not yet been opened for the traffic of the day.

“Some have come too early to enter the city,” said the Tourist.

“Yes, and some will come too late,” remarked the Traveller.

And so shall it ever be with the children of men at the Portal of Life and Death before the City of the Great King.

Chapter VIII: From the Tourist's Diary

Chapter VIII: From the Tourist's Diary

“Whate’er of earth is form’d, to earth returns ;
The soul alone, that particle divine,
Escapes the wreck of worlds, when all things fail.”

Ten years have passed since the events herein recorded took place. They have been set down for the most part from memory ; but they seem so fresh that nothing of importance has been forgotten. The writer even remembers a page from the diary of the Tourist. It was written on the day of Reba Hassan’s funeral and handed to me that night. It will serve as a fitting epilogue to this little book.

Tuesday. “Since last Saturday I have visited with my friend, the Traveller, the various sites associated with our Lord’s last days upon this earth—Gethsemane, Calvary, the Empty Tomb—we have spent serious hours together at these sacred places. The Traveller intro-

88 In Palestine at the Empty Tomb

duced me to "Father Kindly," keeper of Gethsemane, and to an aged Greek professor with whom we visited Calvary and the Empty Tomb. The companionships of these three days past and the wisdom of the Greek have banished skepticism from my heart and life. From Sunday midnight to Monday's dawn I watched by the bier of Reba Hassan, daughter of Shukrey Ali Hassan, with the Traveller. Our conversation there is indelibly written on the tablet of my heart. 'There is no mystery in death.' So says the Traveller. So say I. This afternoon we buried beautiful Reba Hassan in the tiny Christian cemetery out beside the Jaffa highway, not far from Bab-el-Wad. The roadway was bordered with Roses of Sharon and the hillside where she lies was carpeted with Lilies of the Valley. I would not exchange the dark memories of the night we watched beside her and the sure hope of eternal life which I experienced at her grave this afternoon for the highest honours that a material world might have to offer. In short, these holy days have given me a new creed. *I believe in the God of The Perfect Life, in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as a vindication of that life,*

in the immortality of Reba Hassan and every other child of the true and living God."

It may further interest the reader to know that the inscription on the stone that marks the grave of Reba Hassan was written by the Traveller. It is carved in Arabic, her native tongue; but the writer has carried the translation in his heart for many years.

"Long evenings in some golden age to be,
In some fair land beside a summer sea;
When death has turned to life; when loss is gain;
When perfect love has banished grief and pain;
When gleams of morning greet the evening star;
When sunrise kisses sunset from afar;
When weary night has changed to endless day;
When thornless roses bloom along the way—
We'll meet thee then, fair Reba, at the throne,
When God and Life shall claim their very own!
We'll greet thee in that golden age to be,
In that fair land beside the summer sea."

THE END

Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: July 2005

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION

111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 014 229 907 0